

Hunt Continues Watergate Testimony

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Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt Jr. spent another four hours yesterday testifying before the federal grand jury investigating the bugging of Democratic headquarters and other alleged acts of political espionage and sabotage.

Prosecutors would not disclose any of the substance of Hunt's testimony, but government sources maintain they are pressing for any evidence that would indicate criminal involvement by persons other than the seven already convicted.

The names of present and former White House aides and top officials of President Nixon's re-election committee figured in the probe last year, these sources said, but insufficient evidence was gathered to bring criminal charges against any of them.

Sources close to Hunt said that he was continuing to cooperate with the grand jury, but they declined to say what information he was supplying. Hunt never before has testified under oath in the Watergate case. The former White House aide and ex-CIA agent pleaded guilty to charges of burglary and illegal eavesdropping at the start of his trial.

Hunt was brought before the grand jury on Tuesday but refused to answer questions until ordered to do so Wednesday morning by Chief U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica who granted him immunity from further prosecution. Since then, Hunt has spent about nine hours closeted with the jurors.

His lawyers, William O. Bitt-

man and Austin Mittler, wait in an anteroom adjoining the grand jury room and conferred frequently with their client. They are not permitted to be present in the jury room itself.

Final sentencing of Hunt has been put off by Sirica pending his testimony to the grand jury and a Senate subcommittee that also is investigating the Watergate affair. He faces a maximum prison term of 35 years and a \$40,000 fine.

G. Gordon Liddy, another former White House aide, is the only one of the seven Watergate conspirators who has received a final sentence. He faces at least six years and eight months in prison and must pay a \$40,000 fine. Liddy appeared before the grand jury on Monday, but refused to testify. Yesterday, his law-

yers filed a motion opposing government efforts to have him granted immunity.

The lawyers argue that Liddy, whom the prosecution has described as the "arch conspirator and boss" in the Watergate bugging, is being asked to answer questions about matters in which he may be implicated, a violation of the Fifth Amendment. His position, they say, is that he is still a defendant in the case and cannot be required to testify against himself.

Unlike Hunt and the four convicted Watergate conspirators from Miami, Liddy was not told at his sentencing Friday that his penalty could be reconsidered if he cooperated with the continuing probes. At Judge Sirica's discretion, however, the sentence could still be reduced, according to the rules of criminal procedure.

Liddy, a lawyer, is surely aware of the rule, government sources said.

Government sources have maintained privately that Liddy is in the best position of any of the Watergate conspirators to provide first-hand knowledge of the involvement, if any, of higher-level officials.

Judge Sirica will rule on the question of granting Liddy immunity at a hearing today. He also will decide whether Liddy should be permitted to be released from jail on bond while his case is being appeal.

Sirica also may pass sentence on James W. McCord, the former security director of President Nixon's re-election committee, who asked in a letter to the judge for a chance to provide further information. McCord appeared Wednesday before a closed session of the Senate subcommittee.